



## LIBRARY OF HEAVEN'S PATH

### C1020: Violetgilt Metal



## Chapter 1020: Violetgilt Metal

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Having his sword abruptly knocked flying, the middle-aged man was taken aback. He hurriedly turned his head around and saw a young man walking over.

"Even ants struggle to continue living, so why do you seek the end?" Zhang Xuan said.

Walking closer, he noted that the middle-aged man possessed a cultivation of Transcendent Mortal 9-dan primary stage. With such strength, he could definitely be considered as an expert in Firesource City.

"I appreciate elder's concern, but I desire nothing more than death..." Knowing that a person who could flick his sword off his hand from a distance away was bound to be far stronger than him, the middle-aged man replied respectfully, not underestimating the other party just because of his young age.

Nevertheless, there was still a forlorn gaze in his eyes.

"To be able to cultivate to a level likes yours before thirty, you are quite an outstanding genius. What is it that left you in such deep despair, such that even living has become a chore to you?" Zhang Xuan asked, intrigued.

Even with the rich resources in Firesource City, a person who could reach Transcendent Mortal 9-dan before thirty could be considered to be an outstanding genius.

A person as talented as the other party had a bright future ahead of him, so why was he attempting to end his life?

"I really can't bring myself to continue living any longer..." The middle-aged man shook his head. "In Firesource City, a land rich in earth flames, the most respected occupation is blacksmith. From seven, I have been studying under Grandmaster Blacksmith Sun Jin as an apprentice. I thought that I would eventually be accepted as his student and rise to great heights... but who knew that I would fail the blacksmith examination for ten years consecutively! For twenty-four whole years, I have remained as a mere apprentice... A person as dull-witted and incapable as me doesn't deserve to live. I have truly brought shame to my family members and the occupation..."

"You have been an apprentice for twenty-four years?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback. "So... you aren't even a 1-star blacksmith at the moment?"

Going by the ranking standard, a Transcendent Mortal 9-dan expert should have been a 5-star pinnacle blacksmith at the minimum. Yet, to still remain as an apprentice... Was this for real?

Could there really be such an untalented person in the world?

"Un. Every time I attempt to forge a weapon, I will find myself being unable to control the temperature of the earth flames well, resulting in the metal ingot going to ruins... After

the previous examination I had, my teacher finally couldn't stand in incompetence any longer and evicted me from his lineage. My family members are still anticipating the day which I become a blacksmith and bring glory to our family name, and yet, I ended up letting all of them down instead. What rights do I have to face the world..." The more the middle-aged man spoke about his matter, the more depressed he became.

Zhang Xuan was slightly surprised.

A Transcendent Mortal 9-dan expert had been studying smithing ever since he was seven, and yet hadn't cleared the 1-star blacksmith examination even after twenty-four years of effort? No matter how untalented the other party was, surely it couldn't possibly be to such an extent?

If that was true, it wouldn't be too hard to imagine the despair the other party was feeling.

"But just what could have happened for him to be unable to clear even the 1-star blacksmith examination?" Zhang Xuan was perplexed.

It might be challenging for a Tongxuan realm 1 cultivator to clear the 1-star blacksmith examination, but as a Transcendent Mortal 9-dan expert, a person who had cultivated his

soul and was capable of precise movements, how could the other party be incapable of smithing a Mortal-tier weapon and qualify as a 1-star blacksmith?

"I have no idea as well. Somehow, I am just unable to successfully smith a weapon." the middle-aged man shook his head.

His multiple failures in the examination had sapped him of his confidence.

"Unable to smith a weapon?" Perplexed, Zhang Xuan looked at the middle-aged man before him with a frown and asked, "Can you smith the most basic weapon you know of for me?"

To think that a Transcendent Mortal 9-dan expert would be incapable of clearing even a mere 1-star blacksmith examination, this was something that was completely inconceivable to Zhang Xuan. It was simply ridiculous, there was no one out in the world who would dare believe this to be true.

"Elder, thank you for saving my life, but I have already made up my mind. Even if I were to smith that weapon, it won't change my mind. A person as useless as me will be better off dead!" the middle-aged man bowed deeply and said.

"There is plenty of time for you to seek the end, there is no need to rush into it now. I happen to be a rather experienced blacksmith myself, and I am intrigued by the problem you are afflicted by. Perhaps, if you show me your smithing process, I might just be able to identify the root of your problem and help you resolve it." Zhang Xuan said.

If the other party was determined on attempting suicide, there was nothing he could do about it. However, the fact that a Transcendent Mortal 9-dan was unable to qualify as a 1-star blacksmith after so many years of effort was bewildering to him, and he felt that there was a need to get to the bottom of it.

"This..." The middle-aged man hesitated.

"Since you are going to end your life anyway, it shouldn't matter, right? It won't be too late for you to do whatever you want to after I fail." Zhang Xuan smiled.

"... Very well then." The middle-aged man nodded.

Indeed. Since he was going to end his life, what did he have to lose?

"There is a chamber which I use for smithing weapons not too far away. All of the required items for smithing are there, so let's head over."

After saying these words, the middle-aged man led the way ahead. Not too long later, they arrived at a rather small chamber.

The chamber had everything that a blacksmith would need, be it earth flames or cauldron. There was a rack placed alongside one of the walls which was filled with a lot of ores. There were a couple of them that were extremely rare, such that it would be difficult to find them in the market. Despite the middle-aged man's low proficiency in smithing, it seemed like he was quite a collector of ores.

Assessing the area, Zhang Xuan's gaze suddenly fell on one of the ores, and his eyelids began twitching in shock.

"Is that... Violetgilt Metal?"

Violetgilt Metal was an extremely rare ore which could be infused into certain types of weapons to boost its might.

"Using this ore and a smithing technique that complements it, I will be able to induce a breakthrough in the Golden Origin Cauldron!" Zhang Xuan's eyes gleamed in agitation.

Having made a promise to the Golden Origin Cauldron back when the latter first submitted to him, he had been looking into the various methods of raising its strength. However, due to the lack of required ores, he had no choice but to put off the matter aside again and again.

Who could have thought that he would find the required ore here?

"I am going to start." Oblivious to Zhang Xuan's astonishment, the middle-aged man said nonchalantly before walking up to his weapon cauldron.

Driving his zhenqi, his hand grasped forward to draw the earth flames from the ground.

A searing blaze surged into the chamber, and under the overwhelming heat, the chamber walls glowed crimson. The middle-aged man flicked his wrist and took out a metal hammer. After which, he grabbed a piece of iron and placed it into the cauldron.

A few moments later, after the iron had softened under the intense heat, he began to hammer it.

Ding ding dang dang!

Under the powerful hammering, it didn't take long for the iron ingot to be shaped into a sharp sword.

Zhang Xuan had to acknowledge that the middle-aged man had reached an incredible mastery in his forging skills, superior to even a 6-star pinnacle blacksmith like him.

Soon, after the shaping of the weapon was finally forged, the middle-aged man extended his hand forward once more, intending to draw earth flames to temper the weapon. Yet, at this moment, the earth flames suddenly ran out of control. It rushed forward with astonishing ferocity, reducing the freshly forged weapon back into a pile of metallic fluid, thus rendering his previous efforts futile.

"Failure again... I knew that I couldn't possibly succeed..." Sighing deeply, despondency surfaced in the middle-aged man's eyes.

He couldn't help but wish for a miracle to happen each time he forged. Perhaps, he might just succeed this time. Yet, like many times before, his prayers hadn't come true.

"This..."

In contrast to the middle-aged man despondency, Zhang Xuan frowned after seeing the other party's smithing process.

With his eye of discernment, even without the Library of Heaven's Path, he was still able to easily see through the issues in the other party's smithing.

There wasn't any significant mistake in the other party's forging, but as for the tempering... It appeared that there was a conflict between the other party's zhenqi and the earth flames, resulting in the other party's inability to control the earth flames. As a result, the earth flames ended up running out of control, devouring the forged weapon clean...

To put it in other words, the issue lay in not what the other party had done but the internal condition of his body. The zhenqi in the other party's body happened to have an attribute that was at odds with the earth flames, causing the earth flames to run amok. This was also the reason why the forged weapon ended up becoming a pile of metallic liquid when he attempted to temper it, rendering his efforts futile.

"Surely a 6-star pinnacle blacksmith should be able to tell that there is a conflict between his zhenqi and the earth flames?" Zhang Xuan frowned.

What that had left Zhang Xuan baffled wasn't how difficult it was to discern the middle-aged man's problem but how easy it was to do so. It was understandable that the middle-aged man wasn't aware of it as he wasn't even a 1-star blacksmith yet, thus he wasn't qualified to access books beyond that of an apprentice. However, there was no way a 6-star pinnacle blacksmith could be oblivious to it.

It was fundamental knowledge for them!

But if so, why didn't the Sun Jin person whom the other party spoke about inform the other party of the matter? Why didn't he try to correct the other party's flaw?

"Wait a moment..." As Zhang Xuan contemplated over the matter, his eyebrows suddenly leaped up.

The reason why a conflict would occur was due to one's cultivation technique being incompatible with the earth flames, but if the middle-aged man had started learning smithing from that Sun Jin person ever since he was seven, how could he still suffer from such a fundamental issue?

"Unless it was done on purpose..." Zhang Xuan's eyes narrowed into slits.

Given the circumstances surrounding the middle-aged man, the only possible reasoning for such a situation was that someone had intentionally taught him the wrong cultivation technique from the start.

But... what did that person have to gain from teaching him the wrong cultivation technique?



Perplexed, Zhang Xuan scanned the room to see if he could find any clues when a thought suddenly surfaced in his mind.

Turning to the middle-aged man, he asked, "Are you the one who found these ores?"

"That's right." The middle-aged man nodded, slightly baffled by Zhang Xuan's abrupt question. "Due to the high concentration of earth flames around Firesource City, there are plenty of ores in the area... Through the natural affinity between the ores and my zhenqi, I am able to locate them quite easily."

"Natural affinity between the ores and your zhenqi?"

"That's right. Our cultivation techniques are imparted by Sun Jin laoshi. As long as we cultivate hard, we will gain a keen sensitivity towards ores, allowing us to find them easily..." The middle-aged man nodded.

"We? Are there many who cultivate the same cultivation technique as you?" Zhang Xuan asked.

The middle-aged man contemplated for a brief moment before replying, "There are. There are around thirty apprentices who had studied alongside me back then. However, most of them were devoured by the earth flames while searching for ores, so there are only me and another one left."

"Is the other surviving person unable to become a blacksmith as well?" As if having come to a realization, Zhang Xuan asked grimly.

"That's right. He's a year older than me, and unable to stand the shame from consecutive failure, he eventually succumbed to the pressure and ended his life last year..." Recalling the fate of his companion, the middle-aged man shook his head and sighed.

To be unable to qualify as a blacksmith even after studying for so many years, it wasn't too difficult to imagine how despondent the other party must have felt.

"Committed suicide?" Zhang Xuan was astonished. He took a sweeping gaze around the room before asking, "Then... where do the ores you collect go to? Surely there should be more than this?"

Since the middle-aged man had an uncanny ability to locate ores, he must have found many of them in the past twenty-four years of his life. He should have collected far more ores than those present in the room.

"I did collect quite a lot, but most of them have gone to Sun Jin laoshi as tuition fee. He has taught me ever since I was young, imparting me much valuable knowledge. Even though I was still unable to become a blacksmith in the end, I am still deeply indebted to him. It is only right that I pay tuition fee to him." the middle-aged man replied.

"Tuition fee?" I see, I finally get it!" Having finally made sense of the entire story, a chilling glint flashed across Zhang Xuan's eyes. In that instant, his face turned terrifyingly cold.

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